

ARE YOU USING IT RIGHT?



Four out of five of these children are incorrectly buckled.
Do you know which one is correct?

THE BIG PICTURE

(Front Cover)

Which child is buckled correctly?

If you guessed the one in the middle, then you're right. The harness straps are flat, snug and in position, and the chest clip is at the proper mid-chest, armpit level.

The other photos illustrate some common mistakes that compromise protection and result in almost 80% of children being improperly restrained.

- **Upper left:** The child is too small to be in a vehicle lap/shoulder belt. The shoulder belt is under the child's arm, and the lap belt is resting on the child's abdomen.
- **Upper right:** Harness straps are too high, loose and the chest clip is too low.
- **Bottom right:** Harness straps are loose and twisted and the chest clip is disconnected.
- **Bottom left:** Although the lap belt is positioned correctly, the vehicle shoulder belt is under the child's arm.

With the wide variety of child restraint systems, belt systems and passenger vehicles, correctly installing a child restraint system can be challenging. This booklet is designed to help you identify and learn how to correct common mistakes when installing a child restraint and securing your child in the restraint. Making the right connections will help improve overall protection for your child. Always read child restraint and vehicle manufacturer's instructions for proper use and installation information.

Air Bag Warning Label

Harness Slots (3 sets)

Harness Chest Clip

5 Pt. Harness System (contacting child at shoulders, hips and groin)

Harness Release Button (red)

Belt Path (not pictured)

See page 7 for an illustration.

Harness Release Mechanism

Pull Strap To Tighten Harness



Air Bags



TAKE A BACK SEAT TO AIR BAGS

- Child should be in the back seat. Seat is in the air bag deployment zone.



AIR BAG
DEPLOYMENT
ZONE

An infant in a rear-facing child restraint should NEVER be positioned in the path of a frontal air bag.

THE DANGER ZONE

- Rear-facing child is positioned in front of the passenger-side air bag deployment zone.
- Seat is resting on the dash/air bag.
- Child is also incorrectly secured.
- Harness chest clip is too low.
- Harness straps are positioned too high (should be at or below infant's shoulders).

Air bags can cause serious injury or death to children, especially infants in rear-facing seats.





Rear-Facing Infant Seats

WELL-CONNECTED



Children are safest when properly restrained in the back seat.

- Harness chest clip is correctly positioned at the child's mid-chest or armpit level.
- Harness straps are snug and straight.

For a snug fit, adjust harness straps so they lie in a straight line without sagging. Place the chest clip at the armpit level.

THE RIGHT ANGLE

- Used with a detachable base, this rear-facing infant seat is positioned at approximately a 45-degree angle (check the manufacturer's recommendation for the correct angle).





TOO UPRIGHT IS WRONG

- An infant seat sitting too upright can cause a child's head to drop forward, cutting off his/her airway.



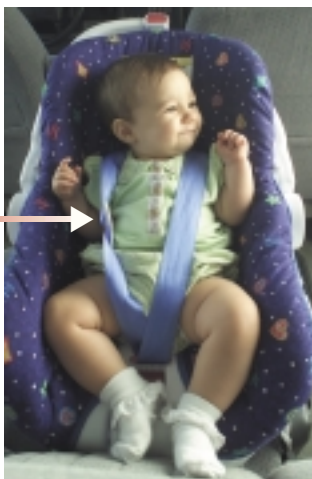
DON'T LET THE CLIP SLIP

- After-market products have forced the chest clip to ride too low on the child's abdomen.



RESIST THE TWIST

- Twisted, loose harness straps compromise protection.
- Chest clip is not fastened.



TAKE THE WRAPS OFF

- Children should **never** be wrapped up in a blanket, thick coat or other bulky garments before being strapped into a restraint system. Instead, place blankets over the internal harness straps.





Rear-Facing Infant Seats

CONTINUED

WELL-COVERED



- Blanket is correctly placed over both the internal harness straps and the child.

A blanket should never be placed between the child and the harness straps, or underneath or behind the child unless the child has special health care needs.

IN POSITION



- Harness straps and chest clip are correctly positioned.
- Blanket covering child is correctly positioned.
- Rolled towels are placed on both sides of the child for proper position.

ON A ROLL

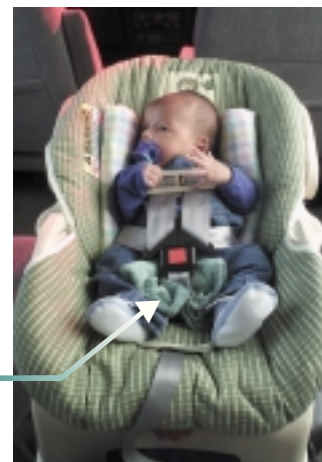
- A rolled towel or foam noodle at the crack of the vehicle seat helps position the infant seat at the correct 45-degree angle (check the manufacturer's recommendation for the correct angle).



ROLLED TOWEL

CLOSE THE GAP

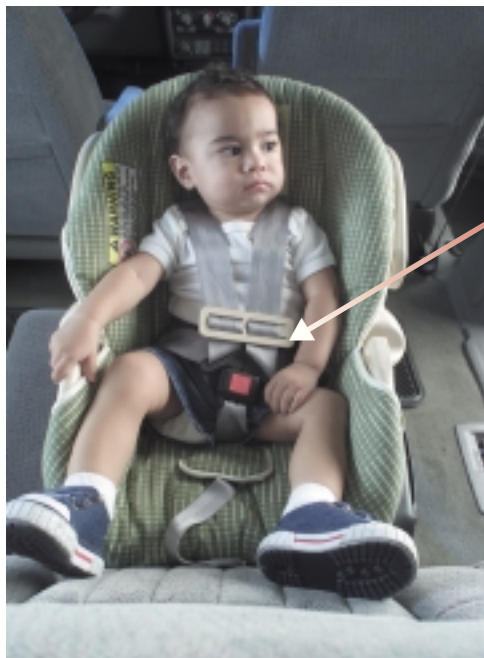
- A washcloth helps fill the space between the restraint buckle and the child's groin area.
- Harness straps are snug and straight.



WASH CLOTH



DON'T COMPROMISE ON SIZE



- The seat is too small for the child. His head is at the top of the seat.
- Chest clip is positioned too low.

Rear-facing infant seats should NEVER be placed in a forward-facing position. Babies should ride rear-facing until at least one year of age and at least 20 pounds.

AVOID MAKING A WRONG TURN

- Rear-facing infant seat is incorrectly placed in a forward-facing position.
- Seatbelt system is loose and placed through the incorrect belt path.
- Harness straps are loose.
- Carrying handle is in the upright position. It should always be in the down position.





Rear-Facing Convertible Seats

BELOW THE SHOULDERS



- Harness straps on **rear-facing seats** should be positioned at, or slightly below, the child's shoulders.
- Harness chest clip is in the correct location.
- Harness straps are snug and straight.

A harness chest clip should be positioned at the child's mid-chest or armpit level. This keeps the shoulder straps in the correct position.

THE RIGHT ANGLE

- Child restraint is positioned at approximately a 45-degree angle (check the manufacturer's recommendation for the correct angle).
- Harness straps and chest clip are correctly positioned on the child's body.





OVERSIZED SEATS MINIMIZE SAFETY

- Infant is much too small for the convertible seat. Her head is in front of the shield.



DON'T TAKE THE WRONG PATH

- Seat belt system is placed through the incorrect belt path.



INCORRECT

CORRECT

A rolled towel at the crack of the vehicle seat helps position the child restraint at approximately a 45-degree angle, or what the manufacturer recommends.

A rubber grip may be placed on the vehicle seat to keep the restraint from slipping.

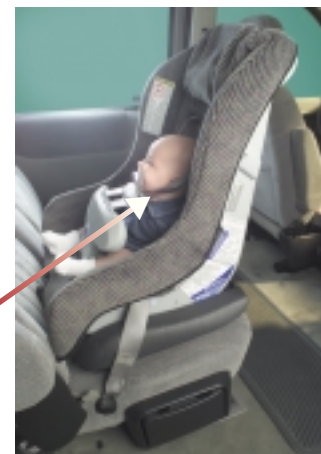
STRAPS THAT ARE LOOSE LIMIT USE

- Harness straps are loose, twisted and positioned too high above the infant's shoulders. Straps must be snug, lie flat and be at, or slightly below, the infant's shoulders.
- Chest clip is positioned too low.



AVOID THE UPRIGHT POSITION

- Restraint is positioned at the incorrect angle causing the infant to sit too upright. This could cause an infant to drop his/her head, cutting off the airway.
- Harness straps are not touching the child's shoulders.
- Child is too small for the restraint.





Forward-Facing Convertible Seats

OVER AND ABOVE



- Harness straps on **forward-facing restraints** should be positioned at, or slightly above, the child's shoulders.
- Harness straps are snug and straight.
- Harness chest clip is positioned at the child's mid-chest or armpit area.

Children should remain forward-facing until they are approximately 40 pounds and 4 years of age.

FIT TO A T-SHIELD

- T-shield is correctly positioned, and is resting snugly on the child's thighs.
- Harness straps are snug and straight and are at, or above, shoulder level.
- Harness chest clip is positioned at the child's mid-chest or armpit level.



SHIELD OF DEFENSE

- Tray shield is correctly positioned on the child.
- Harness straps are snug and straight and are at, or above, shoulder level.





TAKE UP THE SLACK



- Harness straps are loose and twisted.
- Harness retainer clip is too low and not connected.

TIGHTEN UP THE STRAPS



- Harness straps are loose.
- Harness chest clip is too low.

STAY CONNECTED

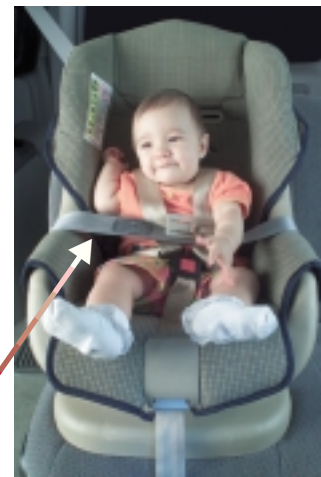
- Harness straps are not in use.

Be sure to read the manufacturer's instructions to determine which harness slots should be used.



KEEP INFANTS REAR-FACING

- This infant should not be forward-facing. Children under one year **and** under 20 pounds need to remain rear-facing.
- Harness straps are loose.
- Chest clip is too low and not connected.
- Seat belt system is placed through the incorrect belt path.





Forward-Facing Seats

TO THE POINT



- 5-point harness is correctly positioned on the child.
- Almost all forward-facing seats can be used with a child weighing 20–40 pounds. Some newer models extend to 60 pounds.

THE RIGHT COMBINATION



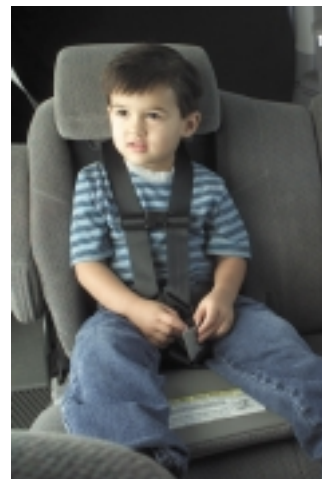
- Combination seats convert from a 5-point harness system to a belt-positioning booster seat.
- At 40 pounds, harness straps should be removed and child should use lap/shoulder belt.
- Some combination seats may be used without harness straps up to 60, 65, 70 or 80 pounds.

AN OVERLAPPING OPTION



- This looks like a booster seat. But, it is a forward-facing seat that can be used with either a lap or lap/shoulder belt combination on a child weighing 30–65 pounds.

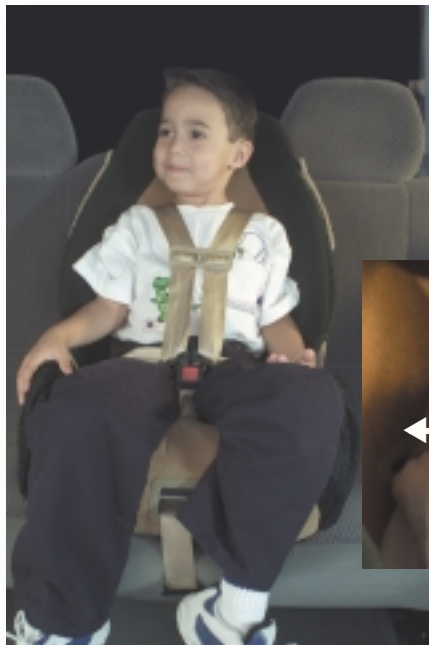
BUILT-IN PROTECTION



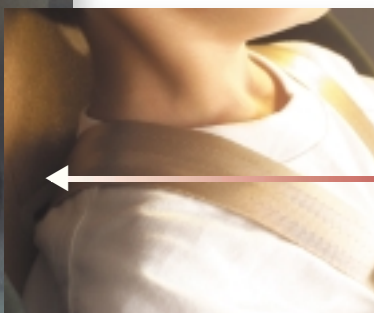
- An integrated seat is a built-in option on some late-model vehicles and is forward-facing only.
- Integrated child restraints have a 5-point harness system.
- Read the vehicle owner's manual for weight limits.



SIZE UP THE SITUATION



- Child has outgrown the internal harness system of the child restraint. The harness straps are below the child's shoulders.
- Internal harness system should be removed.
- Child should use the seat as a belt-positioning booster with the vehicle lap/shoulder belt system.



KEEP STRAPS ABOVE THE SHOULDERS

- Harness straps in a forward-facing restraint system should not be below the child's shoulders.

DON'T BOOST THEM BEFORE THEY'RE READY

- Child is too small for a shield booster. The shield must never be at the child's face level.
- A shield booster seat with the shield in place can be used for children between 30–40 pounds. However, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends children over one year and between 20–40 pounds be restrained in a forward-facing child safety seat with a full harness.





Belt-Positioning Booster Seats

RAISE THEM UP

- No-back booster is used to correctly position the child in a vehicle lap/shoulder belt.

High-back and no-back booster seats are for children who have outgrown child safety seats and are not large enough for the vehicle belt system. This includes children who are between 40–80 pounds, approximately four to eight years of age.



Always use the lap/shoulder belt combination with a belt-positioning booster. Never use a lap belt only.



A GOOD FIT

- High-back booster is used to correctly position vehicle lap/shoulder belt on the child.
- A seat belt system may not fit properly on children weighing less than 80 pounds and who are under 4 feet, 9 inches tall.



LAP/SHOULDER BELT A MUST FOR NO-BACK BOOSTER



- Child is incorrectly positioned with a vehicle lap belt only and is at risk for serious abdominal, spinal and other injuries.
- Always use the lap/shoulder belt with a no-back booster.

LAP/SHOULDER BELT A MUST FOR HIGH-BACK BOOSTER



- Child is incorrectly positioned with a vehicle lap belt only and is at risk for serious abdominal, spinal and other injuries.
- Always use the lap/shoulder belt with a high-back booster.

AVOID CHILD'S PLAY

- Hard toys and other objects can become dangerous projectiles during hard braking and crash situations. Use soft toys only.



Always use the correct child restraint system. Never use pillows, books or towels to boost a child. Doing so can compromise your child's safety.



Seat Belt Systems

MAINTAIN GOOD POSTURE



- This lap/shoulder restraint system fits properly. The child's back is straight and her knees are bent at the edge of the vehicle seat.

The lap belt should fit snug and low over the upper thighs. If it rides up on the abdomen, it could cause serious injuries in a crash.

KEEP LAP BELT LOW ON THE UPPER THIGHS

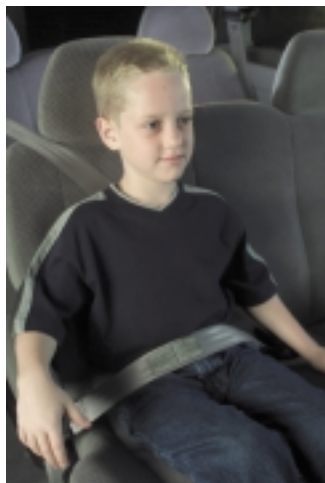
- The lap belt is positioned securely on the child's upper thighs.



Children should sit straight against the seat back. Shoulder belts should fit snugly across the chest.



NO BELTS BEHIND THE BACK



- Shoulder belt is incorrectly positioned behind the child's back.
- Lap belt is too high on the child's stomach.

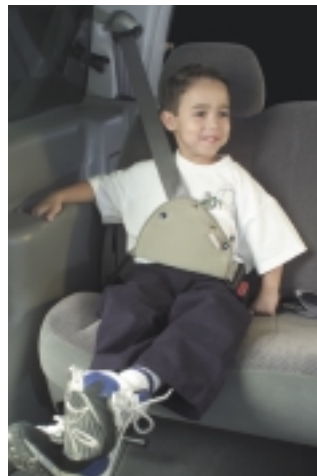
Never allow a child to place a shoulder belt behind his/her back.

A BELT UNDER THE ARM CAN CAUSE HARM

- Running the shoulder belt under a child's arm can cause life-threatening injuries in a crash.
- Child is too small to be in a vehicle lap/shoulder belt.
- Lap belt is on the child's abdomen.



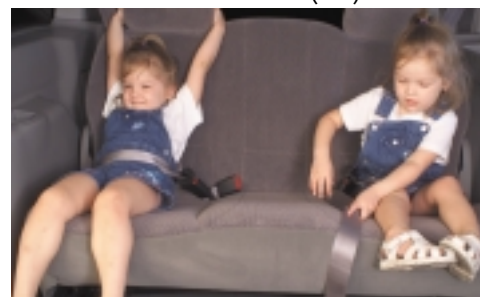
SEAT BELT POSITIONING DEVICE



- Add-on product has positioned the vehicle lap belt too high on the child's abdomen. These types of products are not regulated or crash-tested by NHTSA.
- Child should be in a belt-positioning booster seat.

DON'T MOVE THEM OUT OF A SAFETY SEAT TOO SOON

- Each child should be in a child safety seat or booster seat.
- Shoulder belt is behind the back of each child.
- Lap belt is on the child's abdomen (left).





Things To Remember

PUT YOUR WEIGHT INTO IT



- Get a tight fit between the child restraint system and the vehicle seat. Put your weight into the child restraint system to compress the vehicle seat while tightening the seat belt as much as possible.

STAY INFORMED

- Information on using vehicle seat belts with child restraints may be obtained from the vehicle seat belts and the owner's manual.
- For proper installation, read both the vehicle owner's manual and the child restraint instruction manual.



SPECIAL NEEDS

- Some children require special child restraints. Premature infants, children with respiratory difficulties, orthopedic challenges, neurological and behavioral problems may require special child restraints.



LOCK IT UP

- Some vehicle seat belt systems require additional hardware such as a locking clip, to lock the child restraint during normal driving conditions.
- Check your vehicle's owner's manual to determine whether a locking clip is needed to secure the child safety seat.



Things To Avoid



THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE

- Infant carriers do not have a belt path or a label stating they meet federal safety standards. Therefore, they are not designed to protect infants in a crash.



THE “CHILD CRUSHER” POSITION

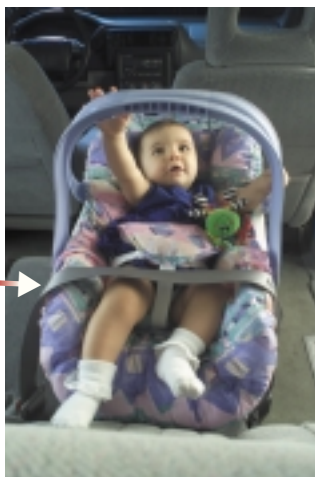
- Child is unrestrained and should be in the child restraint in the back seat. No adult can safely transport a child on his/her lap.



An unrestrained child in the front seat is in the “child crusher” position.

NO CARRY-ONS

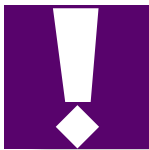
- Infant carrier does not have an internal harness system, a belt path for the vehicle belt system or a label stating it meets federal safety standards.
- Vehicle belt is not attached to the carrier due to lack of belt path.



A LACK OF RESTRAINT

- A child should **never** be unrestrained in any vehicle seat, with **or** without an air bag system.





Warning Labels

READ THE LABELS



- Air bag warning label on the seat belt system.

HEED THE WARNING



- Air bag warning label on child restraint system.

Air bags have saved the lives of more than 6,200 people. However, they work best when everyone is buckled. Children under 12 are safest when properly restrained in the back seat.

STAY ADVISED

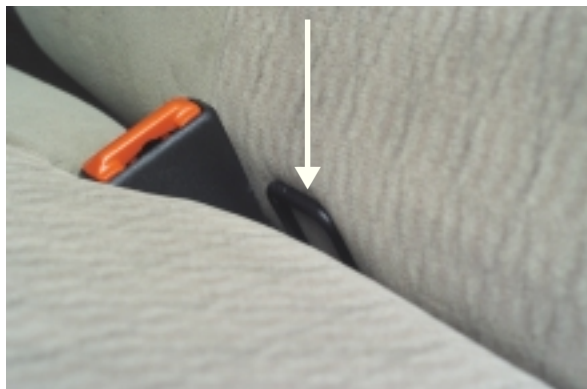
- Air bag warning label on vehicle visor.



LATCH (LOWER ANCHORS AND TETHERS FOR CHILDREN)



LOWER ANCHOR ATTACHMENT



UPPER TETHER ATTACHMENT

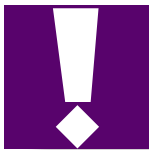


LATCH CHILD RESTRAINT ATTACHMENT



Upper tether attachments improve protection by attaching the top of the child safety seat more securely to the vehicle. Older model vehicles may require special hardware installation.

By September 2002, all new vehicles and child safety seats will be equipped with the LATCH attachments.



Compatibility Issues

NO MIDDLE SEAT

- Some vehicle seats do not have a middle position that can be used with a child restraint system.



CONTOURED SEAT

- Contours in vehicle seats can make it difficult to install a child restraint correctly.
- Rear-facing convertible seat is too upright.



JUMPSEATS

- Child restraint system manufacturers prohibit the use of child restraints in side-facing vehicle seats (jumpseats).



SEAT BUCKLES

- Buckles on extended webbing may make it difficult to properly install a child restraint system.



Proper Child Restraint Recommendations

Conditions	Infants	Toddlers	Older Children
Weight and Age	Up to 20–22 pounds, from birth to at least 1 year	Over 20 pounds, up to about 40 pounds and over 1 year	Over 40 pounds and up to about 80 pounds or more
Type of Seat	Infant only or rear-facing convertible	Convertible/forward-facing	Belt-positioning booster
Seat Position	Rear-facing only	Forward-facing	Forward-facing
Always make sure	Harness straps are at, or below, shoulder level.	Harness straps should be at, or above, shoulder level.	Belt-positioning booster seats are used with lap/shoulder belt combination only.
Warning	Do not place infants in the front seat of vehicles with air bags.	All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat.	Make sure the lap belt fits low and tight to avoid abdominal injuries.



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